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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 003598

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TAGS: [ECON](#) [EFIN](#) [PGOV](#) [KCRS](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: PRT TIKRIT: SALAH AD DIN APPROVES 2008 PROVINCIAL
BUDGET

Classified By: PRT Team Leader Steven Buckler 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (U) This is a PRT Tikrit, Salah ad Din cable.

12. (U) SUMMARY. With an enthusiasm and pride not normally seen at its meetings, the Salah ad din Provincial Council (PC) approved its 2008 budget and toasted this achievement as a group after its meeting. END SUMMARY.

PRT Pleads for Transparency

13. (C) On September 14 a pair of influential PC members asked PRToff whether any other provinces had submitted their 2008 budget and proceeded to tell PRToff proudly that Salah ad Din,s budget was ready. COMMENT: This was not welcome news. The PRT had received assurances that all local councils would have input into the budget process and this had not happened. END COMMENT

14. (C) The PRT had stressed for months that in order to be seen as legitimately representing all of the people of Salah ad Din, input from local councils/officials was essential prior to a vote. Heeding PRT advice, provincial officials distributed the project list at an October 2 meeting. This gave local officials an opportunity for review and comment. The Provincial Council approved the budget on October 10.

Winners and Losers

15. (C) A PRT review of the budget identifies clear winners and losers at the district level. The cities of Tikrit and Tuz were clear winners. Tikrit, with 15 percent of the population received 33.8 percent of the budget allocation. Tuz, with 13 percent of the population received 27.66 percent of the allocation. The biggest losers were Balad and Samarra. Balad with 18.7 percent of the provincial population received 8.5 percent of the budget allocation. Samarra with 17 percent of the population received 6.6 of the budget allocation. Allocations for the other districts in Salah ad Din were as follows: Al-Daur) 7.2 percent of the population, 4.38 percent of the budget; Al Shirqat - 12.3 percent of the population, 7.4 percent of the budget; Al-Dujayl) 7.2 percent of the population, 5.1 percent of the budget; and Baiji) 9 percent of the population, 6.6 percent of the budget.

16. (C) That Tikrit and Tuz received widely disproportionate shares of the budget is no surprise. The Tuz bloc accounts for 15 of 41 Provincial Council members; Tikrit 11 of 41. PC members from Tikrit defend the imbalance on the grounds that Tikrit provides many services that are utilized by the entire province, such as Tikrit University and a pair of hospitals and as such they should receive more funding. COMMENT: The lack of numerical balance on the council is the result of the

Sunni boycott of elections and this imbalance is the key roadblock to development of a truly democratic and representative PC. END COMMENT

¶7. (C) The allocation for Balad was particularly low. Balad has an engaged and effective mayor and the security situation is now permissive enough to allow project execution. The PRT knows that Balad actively worked on submitting projects and that those projects were well thought out and prioritized. The mayor indicated that while he understood and was comfortable with the process, he was disappointed with the results. He noted that one reason for the smaller allocations was the inability of the local councils and the district council to work together in designing their budget request. COMMENT: PRT has offered assistance in helping to develop a common development strategy for the district, but the Mayor has said that this is something he has under control and declined our assistance. END COMMENT.

¶7. (C) COMMENT: While not perfect, the province has made great strides in its budget development process. This is the first time where districts have had at least some input into the process. While the PRT needed to push for more local input once released, PC members clearly understand the budget process must be a collaborative between themselves and the districts. While many districts were not happy with their allocations, the budget development process saw district officials visiting Tikrit without PRT involvement or prodding. This has set the stage for local level participation in the execution phase and PRT is beginning to hear more frequently that local officials are visiting with Provincial officials more frequently to push for movement on stalled projects in their districts. END COMMENT.

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¶8. (U) For additional reporting from PRT Tikrit, Salah ad Din, please see our SIPRNET reporting blog:
<http://www.intelink.sgov.gov/wiki/Tikrit>.
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